

# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

## news release

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

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### DECISION ON STEEL SHOT FOR WATERFOWL HUNTING ANNOUNCED

Steel shot ammunition will be used for waterfowl hunting on selected areas in the Atlantic Flyway starting in 1976 Secretary of the Interior Thomas S. Kleppe announced in Louisville, Kentucky.

The use of steel or other non-toxic shot will be extended to selected areas in the Mississippi Flyway in 1977, and the Central and Pacific Flyways in 1978.

Areas where steel shot must be used will be identified jointly by the Fish and Wildlife Service and the State fish and game departments. Primary attention will be focused on known problem areas.

The purpose of the steel shot requirement is to stop the accumulation of spent lead pellets in areas where they cause lead poisoning problems. Waterfowl frequently ingest these pellets and subsequently die from lead poisoning. While steel shot is the only available substitute for lead at the present time, other types of shot are being investigated and may be available in the future.

The use of steel shot will apply only to the hunting of ducks, geese, swans, and coots because the hunting of these species is believed to be the source of most of the lead shot deposited in wetland areas, and causing lead poisoning. The hunting of other species of aquatic and upland game birds does not appear to be a source of significant lead poisoning problems.

The decision to begin the implementation of the use of steel shot in the Atlantic Flyway is based upon the finding that the problem is most acute on the Atlantic seaboard. The decision to implement the program progressively nationwide over 3 years is designed to allow time for ammunition manufacturers to develop production capabilities and for waterfowl managers to further identify lead poison problem areas.

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